Central American NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Central American Group of the Spanish Main Society.

Editor: Bernard Davies MA

Issue No 20 June 1985

EDITORIAL

Our sad news is to report that Bernard Davies died on 27th April.

Bernard started the Central American Newsletter and the Central American Group for the Spanish Main after the successful meeting in the Carisbrooke Hall during the London International Stamp Exhibition of 1980.

A very great deal of useful information is contained in the twenty Newsletters Bernard produced and we are planning to reprint and publish them as one unit in his memory.

Bernard was also secretary/treasurer of the Spanish Main Society; he will be a great loss. His philatelic interests conentrated on Central America and in particular the Republics of El Salvador and Nicaragua. He had fine collections of both the latter and was due to display these to the National Philatelic Society on Saturday June 15th, the day the Spanish Main are holding their AGM at the Victory Services Club. Michael Birks has stepped into the breach and will show his collection of Nicaragua; this meeting is also held at the Victory Services Club (in the Ball Room) and starts at 2 p.m..

I plan to carry on both the Central American Group and the Central American Newsletter with the help of Michael Birks for the forthcoming season and for 1986/7 I hope Michael perhaps with help from some other member will be able to take over the reigns. Meantime we look for the continued support and help of our members as well as a regular input of philatelic information, articles short or long, questions and answers .... anything that can be made into grist for our "copy bank". Bernard has set us a target in the first twenty numbers and it is now up to us to continue the good work and produce another matching volume.

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England

John Fosbery
President, The Spanish Main

THE WATERLOW DIE PROOF BOOKS by Michael P Birks

In 1961 Waterlow and Sons security printing division closed down, and its contracts were taken over by De La Rue. Enquiries to the firm of De La Rue regarding the archives of Waterlow's have all drawn a blank; the standard reply always informs the enquirer that the archives were disposed of and no longer exist. This may or may not be true for the bulk of the archive, but by some miraculous stroke of luck, the die proof books have survived, and are now in the possession of the stamp firm of Christies/ Robson Lowe of London.

There are many unanswered questions about certain stamp issues of Central and South America, and I am pleased to be able to report here, that some of them can now be answered.

Firstly the books themselves. In addition to ascribing a number to each die, and giving a brief description, the name of the engraver is also given.

Die No	Design No.	Description	Name	Date given out	Date finished	S	H
1054	✓	Costa Rica Stamp 2 Pesos	W. Bain	9-11-83	13-1-97		H
1055	✓	Costa Rica Stamp 1 Peso	" Bain	"	"		"

The "date given out" may possibly be the date the work was given to the engraver. This explanation was considered by Mr Robson Lowe, but he now feels the weight of evidence suggests the probability that this was the date the die was transfered to the platemaker. To complicate matters further, the various recorders who entered details in the die proof books, seem to have chosen their own method of recording rather than having followed a set pattern, and so it is possible that both explanations could be correct. It would seem to depend upon the die in question and the whim of the recorder.

With around fifty dies having the same "date finished" it would appear that this date refers to the date when the die was "finished with", or disposed of.

The 1899 Public School Tax Stamps

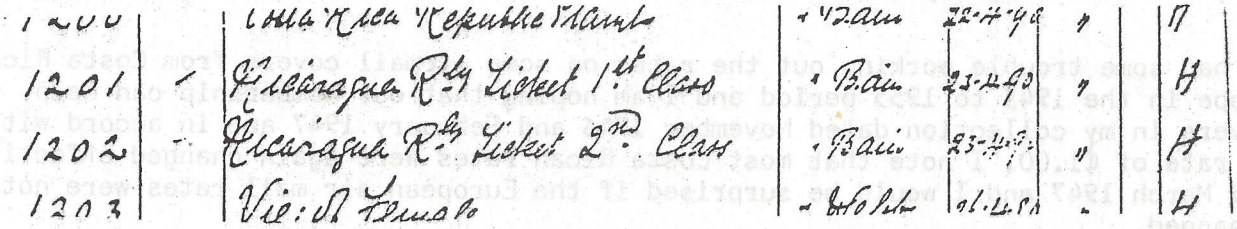
Die No	Design No.	Description	Name	Date given out	Date finished	S	H
1070	✓	Nicaragua Stamp [illegible]	W. Bain	15-1-89	"		"
1071	✓	Nicaragua Stamp Proof	" Bain	16-1-89	"		H
1072	✓	Nicaragua Stamp 1 Cent	" Bain	16-1-89	"		H
1073	✓	Nicaragua Stamp 2 Cents	W. Bain	16-1-89	13-1-97		H
1074	✓	Nicaragua Stamp 5 Cents	" Bain	16-1-89	"		H
1075	✓	Nicaragua Stamp 10 Cents	" Bain	16-1-89	"		H
1076	✓	Nicaragua Stamp 1 Peso	" Bain	16-1-89	"		H
1077	✓	Nicaragua Stamp 50 Cents	" Bain	16-1-89	"		H
1078	✓	Nicaragua Stamp 50 Pesos	" Bain	finished	"		H

It was already known that these stamps were engraved and printed by Waterlows, but it has now been established that the work was done by Bain, and the dies handed over on 16th January 1889, to enable plates to be made. Forbin gives the date of issue as 1889. The dies were some of those disposed of on 13th January 1897.

As can be seen from the photostat on the previous page, a die number was allocated to each of the dies. The first puzzles me. Die No 1071 is described as "Nicaraguan Stamp Original", and yet as far as I am aware, there was a separate die engraved for each value. What then, was the "original"?

The 1911-12 Railway "Coupons"

It was my researches into these stamps, and in particular my wish to confirm my suspicion that these stamps were printed by Waterlow, that prompted me to ask for photostats of the relevant pages of the die proof books.



The extract above proves conclusively that these two stamps were indeed engraved and printed by Waterlows, the engraving being done by Bain.

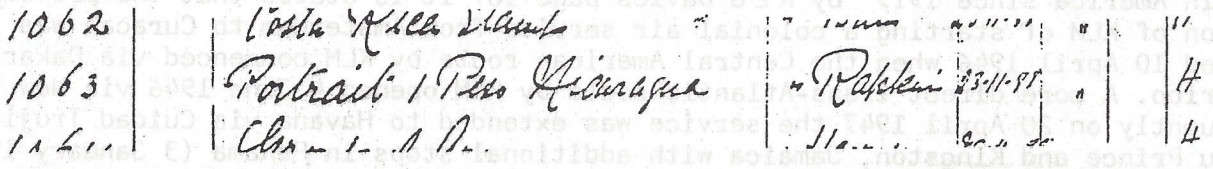
What is most unexpected, is that from these die proof books it is possible to say that the original purpose of these stamps was as railway TICKETS, and that the numerals inscribed on them refer to 1st and 2nd class, and NOT to 1c and 2c. The tickets are undenominated.

Thus catalogue descriptions such as "15c on 10c on 1c" will have to be changed to "15c on 10c on 1st" after over 70 years of being wrongly described.

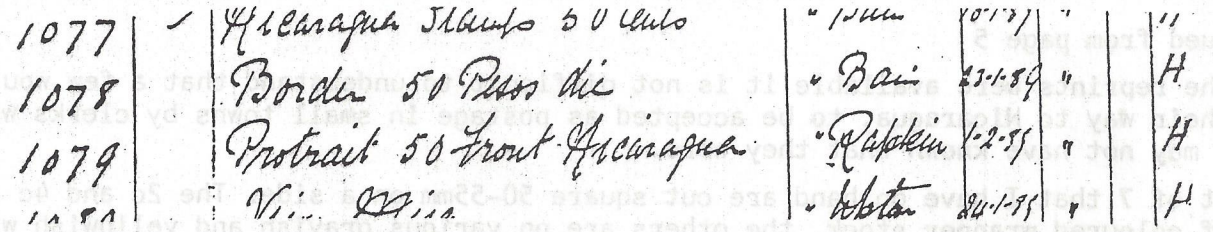
The dies were handed over to the platemaker on 23rd April 1890, and if put to press as speedily as the Public School Tax Stamps, they would have been issued in 1900. Certainly by 1903 they had been surcharged and issued for fiscal use, according to Forbin. These two dies, numbered 1201 (1st) and 1202 (2nd) were also some of those disposed of on 13th January 1897.

Finally Two Puzzles!

First, a one peso portrait, die No 1063. Could this die by Rapkin, be a banknote?



Secondly die No 1079, "Protrait (sic) 50 Front Nicaragua" means nothing to me. Could this die, engraved by Rapkin, have any connection with die No 1078 engraved by Bain, which likewise means nothing to me?



Acknowledgment

I am indebted to Mr Colin Fraser of Christies/Robson Lowe for his time and trouble in supplying photostats of the relevant pages of the die proof books, and to Mr Robson Lowe for his valued opinion.

TWO QUERIES CONCERNING THE COSTA RICAN TO EUROPE AIR MAIL SERVICE

by Dr RICHARD H SAUNDREY

Possibly the most comprehensive article on the Costa Rican Air Mail rates so far written is that by H D Mitchell in the Costa Rican Philatelist (Vol IV, No 2) in May/June 1955. This article contains an excellent table for all the postal rates for letters that were ever likely to be met with by the average American collector of Costa Rican airmail covers. In this article it is stated that the first special Airmail rates to Europe were introduced in June 1939 with subsequent changes in rates in both 1940 (to accommodate the increase of the inclusive surface rates) and in 1945 when they were reduced slightly such that the rate was ¢1.25 for the first 5g weight, and ¢1.00 for each additional 5g or part thereof. It was clearly suggested that these European rates were still apparently current in 1955 when the article was written, but with slightly lower rates to Spain and her Colonies (provisions of the UPU).

I have had some trouble working out the rates on some airmail covers from Costa Rica to Europe in the 1945 to 1955 period and I am hoping that our membership can help. Two covers in my collection dated November 1946 and February 1947 are in accord with the 5g rate of ¢1.00. I note that most Costa Rican rates were again changed effective from 15 March 1947 and I would be surprised if the European air mail rates were not also changed.

Dates and rates for European covers that I have:-

	7	August	1947	¢1.50
*	18	July	1948	¢1.55
*	24	April	1949	¢1.55
*	13	August	1949	¢1.90
*	1	October	1949	¢1.35
*	15	May	1950	¢3.00
	23	July	1951	¢3.55
	21	August	1952	¢1.30 (registered)

Clearly none of these covers fit in with Mitchell's suggested rate of ¢1.25 + n(¢1.00). If anyone can help me with these rates I would be most grateful.

The second query is related to these covers. The five covers that I have asterisked (*) have either been endorsed in the hand of the writer of the envelope, or by use of a special boxed handstamp, to be sent via KLM. Can anyone please confirm a special Central American to Europe airmail service by KLM? If so, would there have been special airmail rates? The only little bit of information that I can add is that in "Airlines of Latin America since 1919" by R E G Davies page 167 it is stated that the pre-war ambition of KLM of starting a colonial air service from Amsterdam to Curacao was realised 10 April 1946 when the Central American route by KLM commenced via Dakar and Paramaribo. A more direct trans-Atlantic route by KLM opened 4 June 1946 via New York. Subsequently on 20 April 1947 the service was extended to Havana via Cuidad Trujillo, Port au Prince and Kingston, Jamaica with additional stops in Panama (3 January 1949) and at Managua and San Salvador (5 May 1951). The idea of a regular KLM airmail service is quite intrigueing.

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once the reprints were available it is not difficult to understand that a few would make their way to Nicaragua, to be accepted as postage in small towns by clerks who may or may not have known what they were.

The set of 7 that I have on hand are cut square 50-55mm on a side. The 2c and 4c are on buff coloured wrapper stock, the others are on various grayish and yellowish white papers. Contrary to the statement in the above advertisement, the 2c and 4c were issued, not as envelopes but as wrappers.

SEEBECK AND ABN Co POSTAL STATIONERY by J W SAUBER

I have been reading with interest about those Nicaraguan volcano cut squares in "The Mainsheet" and the "Central American Newsletter". Perhaps the following may be of interest, It is an excerpt from a price list of Janet van den Berg, Worthington, Ohio, USA, dated August 1960.

> "Nicaraguan Seebeck Envelope Reprints. Most stamp collectors don't know that, at the same time Seebeck (picturesque contractor to various Latin American Post Office Departments two generations back) received the right to any remainders and to the plates used in printing one year's issue of stamps in return for providing the next year's set free of charge, he also got the right to postal stationery remaining on hand and to the stones used in printing cards, envelopes, etc. in payment for the new series. Being "Scotch" and knowing that collectors wanted stationery cut squares he simply produced reprints in special sheet form and trimmed them down square. We recently had the Honduran ones and they vanished overnight - everybody wanted them. From a stock untouched for over 60 years, we offer such 2, 4, 5, 10, 20, 30 and 50c 1900 Nicaraguan volcano envelope reprints in fine, crisp, unused cut-square condition for only 30c the set of 7. (The 2 and 4c were prepared for use but never issued. Reprints were none-the-less made.) We note that, in 1901, the 7 sold for 50c a set. The market has been bare for fully half a century."

Older collectors may remember that Prof Lowell Ragatz, FRPS,L, well-known for his publication of "The Fournier Album of Philatelic Forgeries", used the name of his wife Janet for his stamp business. For the most part he dealt with Cinderella material, of which he had a vast stock. I assume that he wrote the above exerpt.

This information raises some interesting questions. The American Bank Note Co. is always credited with printing the volcano stamps and envelopes, which are inscribed with its name. Mr Seebeck's company was the Hamilton Bank Note Co.. One of the terms of the 1889 contract between the government of Nicaragua and Hamilton was that Hamilton would receive all stamps, covers and postal cards of the current 1882 issue and any older issues still on hand. Furthermore, in 1892 ABN Co. reprinted the issues of 1869-80 to government order for delivery to Seebeck. However, if there were any more instances of cooperation between ABN Co. and Seebeck, they have not been publicised. The contract between Nicaragua and Hamilton expired in 1899, and Seebeck himself died on June 23, 1899. Therefore, the above advertisement for Seebeck Envelope Reprints can not be taken literally. Whatever these reprints are, they could not have been prepared for Seebeck.

Can anything be salvaged from this, if only to vindicate Prof. Ragatz? There is a possibility which is entirely speculative. After Seebeck's death his business affairs were taken over by Henry Calman and Ernest Schernikow, the latter being Seebeck's brother-in-law. Both of these men were philatelic entrepreneurs. Among the activities of the former was to dispose of the tens of millions of Seebeck reprints. It is thought by some that many of the reprints attributed to Seebeck were in fact printed after his death to the order of his successors. As for Schernikow, perhaps his greatest achievement was the elaborate set of reprints of certain nineteenth century US stamps and essays that he made in 1903. It is reported that he purchased the original dies. With talents such as Calman and Schernikow available, is it possible that somehow they obtained the dies for the volcano envelopes of 1900 and proceeded to make reprints? Alternatively, is it possible that they persuaded ABN Co. to supply them with reprints as a logical extension of the philatelic history of the previous ten years? In either case, the name of Seebeck may have been attached to this enterprise for commercial reasons, to the confusion of Prof. Ragatz.

If indeed these reprints were available as early as 1901, it is otherwise difficult to explain why ABN Co., quite an ethical organization, would have made such reprints or samples available in quantity while the envelopes were in current usage. However,

Continued on page 4.

NOTES ON GUATEMALA T.P.O.'S

by DOUGLAS BAYLISS

The best guide to the TPO marks of Guatemala is Guatemala 2, but this is incomplete in some respects, and, of course, something new is always likely to turn up. In particular, the period 1910-1930 does not have very good coverage.

In the following notes, marks described or illustrated in the Handbook are given as "G/" followed by a reference letter.

1. "TRENES LOCALES." The illustration for G2/c appears to be a reconstruction and omits the word "AMBULANTE". Mark Spycher has kindly provided a complete example of 1888: I have one of 1890.

2. "AMB. POSTAL F.C.C." G2/i shows a three-line day/month"year, but my examples have month"day/year; also I have a part-strike of 1903 reading "....UINALA A SAN JOSE" - perhaps a misspelling of "ESQUINTLA". (Illus)

3. "AGENTE POSTAL/F.C.I. DE C.A." Not mentioned in the Handbook. I have this in a 28mm d.c. dated 1918.

4. "AMBULANTE (*)/GUATEMALA" c1920. I have two part-strikes on 5c and 10c of the long Waterlow pictorial set, the former dated 1924. Again, not mentioned in Guatemala 2.

5. "AMBULANTE POSTAL" duplex with routes and route numbers.

   These were in use c1919-1924. There are two types: one with letters 2·5mm high and a killer of parallel bars terminating at the datestamp end with a hollow circle. Those I have seen are struck in violet with a 30mm d.c.. I have route No. 2 Guatemala - Pto Barrios and No. 4 Guatemala - Ayutla.

   The other type has 3mm letters in a 32mm d.c. and a killer of five parallel plain thick bars. It is usually struck in blue and is similar to G2/k. The only route I have is No. 4, Guatemala - Ayutla.

   Guatemala 2 does not describe the first type and makes no mention of route numbers.

6. DUPLEX WITH 4-LINE ROUTE BLOCK 19mm HIGH.

   Again there are two types. One with rather thin lettering 3·5mm high is shown in the Handbook as G2/r; the other has thicker letters 4mm high.

   Both are struck in violet as a rule, but I have "TRECE LINEA RETALHULEU CHAMPERICO" in blue, type G2/r. This route is unidentified in the Handbook.

   These two series were in use from 1929 to 1946. Non-standard versions in my collection are:-

   a) "LINEA GUATEMALA PTO. BARRIOS" with four rectangular blocks of colour replacing the route number. This is on a 1c olive-green Obligatory Tax stamp.

   b) "AMBULANTE LINEA RIO BRAVA TIQUISATE" dated 1940 with short dashes instead of dots in the datestamp portion. This was used on a spur line to the Cia Agricola (United Fruit Co.) headquarters. (Illus)

   Neither is mentioned in the Handbook; nor are two miscellaneous TPO marks from this period of which I have two part-strikes:-

   c) "AYUDANTE 1°" datestamp with a killer of four plain bars. c1938.

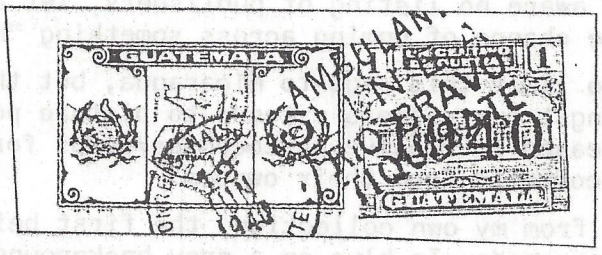
   d) "AMBULANTE POSTAL SUPLENTE BUZONERO 2" This is unframed, with a thin horizontal bar separating Buzonero 2; ie a 4-line mark used c1939. (Illus)

7. "SUPLENTE" A part-strike, unframed, similar to G2/w, used c1947.

8. INSPECTOR'S HANDSTAMP. An unframed circular mark reading "CORREOS NACIONALES • GUATEMALA, C.A. •" with in the centre a 2-line INSPECCION DE AMBULANTES between two thin horizontal bars.

This is on a cover of 1949 showing two strikes of "N°. OCHO LINEA GUATEMALA PTO. SAN JOSE" in type G2/s.

2



6b

6d

CAUSERIE

2001 Does anyone know the significance of the marking "Steamer Connection", on this cover from Nicaragua to Switzerland? The cover is backstamped "New Orleans" on 23 July 1942, "Brownsville" on 27 July, and "New York" 1 August. It may be that the marking has nothing whatsoever to do with Nicaragua, but it would be interesting to know its origin.

2002 Doug Bayliss sends us another "Missent to..." mark from the Central American area. This time the mark is from Honduras, and on a cover sent to South Africa from Canada. The postman mistook "S.A." for "C.A.".

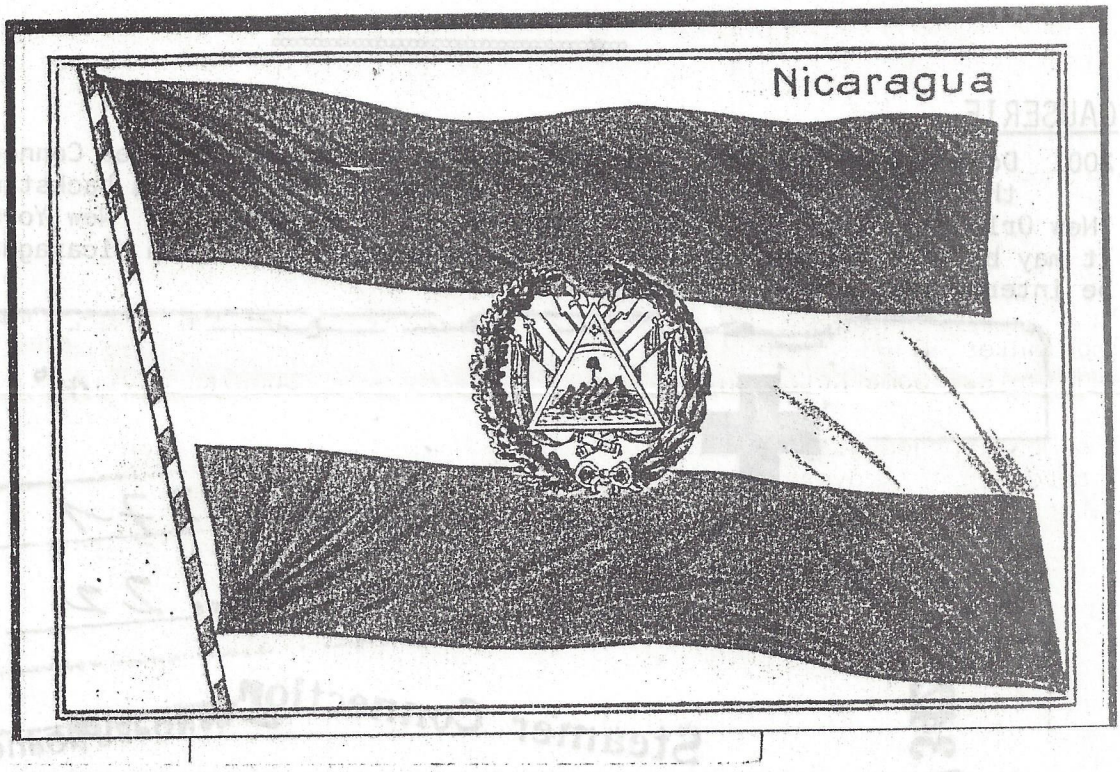
"EXTRAVIADO A HONDURAS"

THE POSTCARD PAGE by Michael P Birks

Postcards have enjoyed a resurgence in their popularity over the past few years, and for some, like myself, they provide a glimpse of the country we collect, but probably will never visit. My own country is Nicaragua, and it would seem that cards from this country are quite scarce, in view of the difficulty in obtaining examples. As far as I am aware no listing of publishers, let alone cards exists, and so there is much more chance of coming across something "new" and unknown.

It is not my intention to limit this page to Nicaragua, but that will depend upon whether the interest amongst our readers extends to picture postcards of other countries. I would be pleased to receive photocopies/cards for inclusion in future issues, preferably with comments from their owners.

To start with, two cards from my own collection, the first being an ideal opening to a display of Nicaraguan cards. In blue on a grey background, the card is numbered 14978 and is published by GHZ & Co. Have I got the initials in the right order, and who is GHZ?



The second card is from radio ham, David C Packard at the American Embassy in Nicaragua, to station KZ5WZ in Panama. The card is a specially prepared private production, and bears the legend "Land of lakes and volcanos".

Date 4 December 1956.

Although not picture postcards these two cards are interesting in their own right.

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compiled by Michael P Birks

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